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were few regular musicians, and at parties, unless it was a very grand affair, a lady played the piano, accompanied by a gentleman on the violin, and monstrous good jigs and reels they played too. But when it got too much like work, almost anybody's carriage driver could be sent for out of the kitchen who could fiddle well enough to dance the Virginia reel by. But when I grew up negro fiddlers were scarce among the plantation hands, except the 'professionals,' who were free negroes. They have been growing scarcer, owing to this superstition about old Pluto.

"Among the city negroes the piano is the favorite instrument, as it is so much easier to acquire a certain proficiency on it than on the violin. In the country, though, it is generally thought unbecoming, at least, for a 'chu'ch member' to play the violin, if not actually an audacious communication with Satan himself. But it involves neither deadly sin nor any spiritual risk whatever to play the accordeon or the 'lap organ,' as they call it. The 'cor'jon,' consequently, is a very popular instrument."

SCANDALIZING THE RATS. — The "Boston Traveller," May 13, 1892, observes that fifty years ago, in some places in New England, it was not an uncommon thing for people to go into the cellars of their houses and scandalize the rats, in the expectation that this would drive them away. It was said that the rats would often disappear after the trial.

SUPERSTITIONS OF NEGROES IN NEW ORLEANS. — Among a collection of cuttings relating to folk-lore, we find in a Northern journal of June 6, 1891, an interesting account of negro superstitions attributed to the "St. Louis Republic:" —

"Webster defines superstition as a 'belief in omens and prognostics,' and further, 'omen, a sign, a presage; prognostic, foreboding, token.' Of all these definitions, the only one used and understood by that most superstitious of all races, the African, is 'sign.' A sign of trouble, of sickness, of joy, of sorrow, of visitors, of accident, a voyage, a death!

"If the cat washes her face with dainty touches of velvety paw, 'Dat a sho' sign hit gwine to rain, Miss Nannie!' If Señor Cockalorum crows lustily three times before the door, 'Gwine hab visitors dis day, Miss Nannie, sho' s you' bawn!' If sparks scatter in golden showers from the chimney, 'Don' move, chile; hit won't burn yo'; dat a sign money comin' to you.' 'Don't burn the egg-shells, honey, case dat bring you sorrow.' 'Fo' de Lawd's sake, see dat rat run 'cross dat heyth [hearth]! You's got a bad enemy, chile, gwine to do you sum dirt.' 'Wha' for you kim back, honey? Don' you know you must n't turn back arter you git sta'ted? Dat sho' sign you gwine to hab bad luck while you out. How cum you let Miss Flo lay her parasol on de bed? You an her be bad friends, sho', you see.'

"These and hundreds of similar sayings and superstitions are as familiar to Southerners as the blue skies and fragrant blossoms of their sunny clime.

"In the extreme South, more especially in Louisiana, and in New Orleans worst of all, where French, Spanish, Italian, and African — all races peculiarly susceptible to occult influences — predominate, superstition runs riot.